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LETTER DATED 1 MAY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TAJIKISTAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On the instructions of my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the statement released on 30 April 1998 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan.

I should be very grateful if you would have the text of the present statement circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Rashid ALIMOV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
the Republic of Tajikistan
to the United Nations

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Annex

[Original: Russian]

Statement issued on 30 April 1998 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan

The people of Tajikistan and all right-thinking forces in our society greeted with great enthusiasm and hope the signing of the General Agreement aimed at establishing lasting peace in the country in order to build a democratic and just secular State.

The leadership of the Republic, adhering to the principle of strict compliance with the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, is taking all possible measures to implement the peace agreements.

Events during the first few months of this year, however, show that there are still forces in the country whose acts of provocation are directly aimed at undermining the peaceful initiatives and creating a tense socio-political situation in the country. These forces are doing their utmost to sow a feeling of distrust between the Government and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), flagrantly violating the peace agreements which have been reached and in fact continuing to carry out acts of military confrontation.

The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has repeatedly appealed to the leaders of UTO and expressed its concern about the increasing incidence of acts of provocation by individual armed units of the Opposition. At the same time, as a result of the failure of the UTO leadership to take decisive measures to put a stop to illegal acts and violations of the General Agreement, on 29 April 1998, in the northern Kafirnigan district, at the junction of the roads to the Ramit gorge and Kafirnigan, a unit of some 25-30 armed men from the Yunusov Namoz detachment blockaded a post of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic. With the threat and use of force and under cover of civilians, this unit forced the military patrol to leave the positions it was occupying. To the demand that they return to the former positions which had been agreed for their troops, the militants responded by firing their weapons and anti-tank rocket launchers. When the representatives of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) and the Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR) visited the site of the incident, they reached agreement with the armed UTO unit that it would withdraw to its previous position; the latter has not, however, kept its promise. From 29 April until now, the militants have continued to shell the positions of the detachment of the Ministry of Defence at Kafirnigan and the permanent position of the 2nd Independent Mountain Sapper Battalion (the 9 km. post on the Dushanbe-Kafirnigan road). Subunits of the Ministry of Defence are returning fire. As a result of the armed confrontation, there are casualties on both sides, including casualties among the civilian population.

On the same day, armed UTO units carried out an attack on the 2nd Local Militia Office of the Zheleznodorozhny district and the military unit of the frontier troops of the Republic stationed at the 7 km. post on the Kafirnigan

road. At the same time, they carried out an attack on the blockhouse of the militia at the Aini-Kafirnigan and Zainab-bibi crossroads. This was preceded by the mobilized training of the armed formations of UTO under the leadership of P. Aliev and R. Sanginov, who quickly, on 29-30 April 1998, began to call up the young people over 20 years of age and the so-called reservists. After distributing his troops in units of up to 100 men from the Rokhatinsk area on a geological base (the village of Karategin), Field Commander P. Aliev took measures to strengthen the posts at the approaches to the village.

In view of the situation which is developing and the failure of the leaders of UTO to take measures to put a stop to the illegal acts of individual armed formations of the Opposition, the consequences of which have been further human casualties and the threatened breakdown of the peace process, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, on instructions from the Government of the country, states that it considers the acts of individual units of UTO to be acts of provocation aimed at undermining the confidence of the parties.

The failure of UTO to implement the provisions of the General Agreement, its stirring up of an unhealthy situation, the destabilization of the social and political situation in individual regions of the country and the acts of armed provocation on the part of a number of field commanders of the Opposition may result in serious consequences and the adoption by the Government of the Republic of decisive measures to protect the constitutional structure.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan appeals to the United Nations, to its Mission in Tajikistan, to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and to the Guarantor States of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord to evaluate the acts of the armed UTO units and to take appropriate measures.